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THE CONFEDERATION AND THE SHAYS REBELLION

THE Shays Rebellion may be said to have begun at Northampton, Massachusetts, on August 29, 1786. There had been a considerable time of preliminary agitation, but on that occasion was seen the first forcible defiance to the government. A mob seized the court-house and prevented the sitting of the Court of Common Pleas and General Sessions of the Peace. The purpose of the rioters was to put an end to legal proceedings for enforcing the payment of debts and taxes. The example set at Northampton was quickly followed throughout the greater portion of the state, and for months the course of justice was seriously obstructed or altogether stopped.¹ As was to be expected, these first steps in rebellion soon led much farther. The insurgents feared that in the Supreme Court indictments for treason would be returned against them. Consequently, they assembled in sufficient numbers completely to paralyze the proceedings of that court at Springfield in the last week of September.² Till the following March the Supreme Court was seen no more in western Massachusetts.

Such extensive opposition to the government could not be maintained without extensive organization. The insurgents therefore attempted to keep up considerable bodies of men, to organize some sort of leadership and co-operation, and to provide themselves with arms and ammunition. All this made the movement seem more far-reaching than it really was. Many conservative and influential persons believed that the insurgents desired to overthrow the state government, and to establish some purely democratic or even communistic system in its place. The present writer believes, for reasons which need not here be given, that this interpretation of the aims of the rebellion was unjust to most of the participants. Nevertheless, it was the accepted view of the political aristocracy of Massachusetts, and it was this view which finally roused them to the stroke by which the insurrection was crushed. In January, 1787, Governor

¹ On this subject there is in the Massachusetts Archives, at the State House in Boston, a wealth of unpublished correspondence between the governor and judges, sheriffs, militia officers, and interested citizens.

² Supreme Judicial Court Record, 1786, folio 405, Office of the Clerk of the Supreme Judicial Court, Court-House, Boston; Massachusetts Archives, CLXXXIX. 20-21; CXC. 265. 266, 289-292; *Boston Magazine*, III. 404.

Bowdoin, who charged the insurgents with "a contempt of all constitutional government, and a fixed determination to persevere in measures for subverting it,"¹ sent against them Major-General Benjamin Lincoln, who believed that their aim was to "sap the foundations of our constitution" in order that, "when an end should be put to public and private debts, the agrarian law might follow."² Lincoln with his strong force of trustworthy militia soon overpowered all opposition; but this force could not have been dispatched, had not the wealthy men of Boston and other towns made up a subscription of nearly twenty thousand dollars. Lincoln himself raised this fund, telling the contributors that it was simply a question of advancing part of their property in order to save the rest.³

Meantime, the Shays Rebellion attracted wide attention throughout the country. The attitude taken towards it by the leading politicians in other states closely reflected that of their brethren in Massachusetts. Not only were the insurgents believed to have subversive purposes, but suspicions were also expressed—quite without foundation, it appears—that they were instigated by British emissaries. Others feared, or hoped, that a monarchy might be established. It is, further, well known that the insurrection gave a strong impulse towards the assembling of the Federal Convention and to the labors of that body for the establishment of a strong national government. Especially is the mark of the Shays Rebellion seen in the constitutional guarantee to every state of a republican form of government and of protection, on application, against domestic violence.

Another matter, closely related to those just mentioned, is the action taken by the federal government with reference to the rebellion. This subject, which was for months a leading question of national politics, seems never to have been seriously investigated. The histories merely tell us that Congress voted to raise troops, pretending that they were needed against the Indians, but really purposing to assist the government of Massachusetts. But how this curious plan originated, whether the danger from the Indians was real

¹ Speech to the General Court, February 3, 1787, *Acts and Resolves of Massachusetts, 1786-87*, 960.

² Lincoln to Washington, December 4, 1786. The original of this important account of the Shays Rebellion is in the Department of State at Washington. It is dated December 4, 1786, and February 22 and March 4, 1787. There is a copy among the manuscripts of Jared Sparks (Harvard University Library, Sparks MSS., LVII).

³ *Ibid.*; Stephen Higginson to Henry Knox, Boston, January 20, 1787, Letters of Stephen Higginson, *Report of the American Historical Association*, 1896, I. 743-745.

or fabricated, whether the Massachusetts authorities wished for federal intervention, what degree or lack of co-operation existed between the state and national governments, how many troops were actually raised, what purpose, if any, they ever served, and what became of them when the insurrection was over—these and other interesting questions have remained almost totally unanswered.

Two reasons prompted Congress to take serious heed of the rebellion. The first was the fear that the government of Massachusetts—perhaps the governments of all the states—might be overthrown. The other was the imminent danger that the insurgents might capture the national arsenal at Springfield. In 1777 Congress had selected Springfield as the most convenient place in New England for storing and distributing military supplies. Springfield had good water communication by the Connecticut river, and was at a safe distance from the sea. Ten acres of land had accordingly been leased from the town for ninety-nine years, and several large wooden buildings had been erected. These served as store-houses, workshops, and barracks. There had been added a foundry for casting brass cannon and a strongly built brick magazine. In 1786 there was at Springfield not less than four hundred and fifty tons of military stores, including some seven thousand new small-arms with bayonets, thirteen hundred barrels of powder, and a large quantity of shot and shell.¹ The seizure of all these munitions by the insurgents would have been a very serious matter. For the safety of the property General Henry Knox, the Secretary at War, was responsible. He was therefore in a position to play, as he did, the leading part in the episode under consideration—a part which has almost entirely escaped the notice of his biographers. A report from him, dated September 20, 1786, gave Congress its first official warning, so far as has been discovered, of the rising storm in Massachusetts.²

On a visit of inspection at Springfield about the middle of the month, Knox had seen that serious commotions were impending. He consulted various persons—among them Major-General William Shepard, who commanded the local militia—regarding possible danger to the federal property. It was clear that there was ground for anxiety. While the insurgents had apparently no matured designs upon the arsenal, they had talked of seizing it, if the government should attempt to punish them. A guard was needed, but how to

¹ Papers of the Old Congress, Library of Congress, Washington, No. 150, Letters of General Henry Knox, Secretary at War, I. 555-557 (Report to Congress, September 20, 1786); No. 151, Reports of Henry Knox, Secretary at War, 243-254 (Report to Congress, March 13, 1787). Cf. J. G. Holland, *History of Western Massachusetts*, I. 227.

² Papers of the Old Congress, No. 150, I. 555-557.

provide it was a problem. Considering that Springfield was in the midst of a somewhat discontented population, Knox was afraid that a small guard might challenge attack rather than avert it. A large guard would involve large expense; and where was the money to be found? From this dilemma he sought escape by shifting the responsibility upon the government of the state. He wrote to Governor Bowdoin on September 16, setting forth his uneasiness about the Continental stores, and requesting such protection for them as the governor might think needful. The federal authorities, he took pains to explain, had refrained from setting a guard because they were confident of the fidelity of Massachusetts, and unwilling even to seem to call that fidelity in question. Moreover, it would have been expensive.¹

Governor Bowdoin promptly handed the responsibility back to Knox. The Secretary at War, he replied, knew better than he how strong a guard was required. He had therefore issued orders to General Shepard to raise whatever number of the Hampshire militia Knox might request. The latter, meantime, had returned to New York and had submitted the report of September 20. On receiving the governor's letter, he again addressed Congress, on September 28, asking whether Shepard should be ordered to raise a guard at once, or be left to act upon his own judgment. The latter course was the one which, under the circumstances, he recommended. The best solution of all, he said, would of course be to send to Springfield a body of four or five hundred federal troops. He refrained, however, for financial reasons, from pressing such action upon Congress. In reply Congress passed on September 29 its first vote with reference to the Shays Rebellion. The Secretary at War was directed to proceed to Springfield and there take such measures as he should judge necessary for the protection of the arsenal. Armed thus with complete authority from both Congress and the government of Massachusetts, Knox started at once for Springfield.² Before he reached that place, however, the first crisis had already arrived and passed.

Tuesday, September 26, had been set for the opening of a term of the Supreme Court at Springfield. For reasons stated above the insurgents decided to intervene. General Shepard, however, not only ordered out the militia, but also issued a call for volunteers. In

¹ *Ibid.*, 551-553 (Knox to Bowdoin, September 16, 1786); 567-571 (Report of Knox to Congress, September 28, 1786).

² *Ibid.*, 559 (Bowdoin to Knox, September 19, 1786); 567-571 (Report of Knox to Congress, September 28, 1786); 575 (Knox to the President of Congress, September 29, 1786); *Secret Journals of Congress*, I. (Domestic Affairs), 266-267.

response, eight or nine hundred men, including many of the leading citizens of the county, assembled to protect the court and guard the arsenal. They were so inadequately armed, however, that Shepard, though he had no permission from Knox, felt obliged to demand the key of the magazine, and take a field-piece and four hundred small-arms to supply his men. On the morning of the twenty-sixth the justices arrived. The insurgents were not far behind. Under the protection of Shepard's men the court was formally opened, but the justices seem to have been thoroughly frightened and transacted hardly any business. The insurgents, led by Daniel Shays, certainly made a threatening appearance. They marched past the court-house in military order with loaded pieces. They demanded that no indictments should be returned against their leaders, that judgments in civil cases should be suspended, and that the militia should disband. They even talked of attacking the troops and seizing the arsenal. One suspects, however, that all this was largely bravado, for, though the mob outnumbered General Shepard's force, they were so poorly armed that they would certainly have been worsted in a contest. Fortunately, by a curious device the danger of a collision was averted. At a conference between the insurgent leaders and the militia officers it was agreed that both parties should disband, and on Thursday afternoon this arrangement was faithfully carried out. On the same day the justices concluded their insignificant proceedings, adjourned *sine die*, and thankfully took their departure alive and safe. Quiet supervened, but three results were apparent—the session of the court had been a failure; the insurgents were elated by their success; the United States arsenal remained as defenceless as before.¹

When Knox reached Springfield, probably on the following Monday, he was greatly impressed with the gravity of the situation. He was convinced that the prestige of the state government was severely shaken, and that the insurgents were planning a complete political and social revolution.² As to the arsenal he was in greater perplexity than ever. He was sure that the insurgents would before long attempt its capture, but General Shepard's bargain with them stood in the way of raising a guard large enough to be of any

¹ On these occurrences at Springfield see note 2, p. 42; also Papers of the Old Congress, No. 150, I. 579-580 (Shepard to Knox, Springfield, September 29, 1786); 583-584 (Knox to the President of Congress, Hartford, October 1, 1786); 587-590 (Knox to the President of Congress, Springfield, October 3, 1786).

² Knox MSS., New England Historic Genealogical Society, Boston, XIX. 23 (Knox to John Jay, Springfield, October 3, 1786); Papers of the Old Congress, No. 150, II. 67-71 (Report of Knox to the President of Congress, October 18, 1786).

service. Since nothing could be done at Springfield, Knox decided to appeal once more to Governor Bowdoin, and accordingly set out for Boston. Just what he wished the governor to do, he would probably have found it difficult to say. His reports show that he hoped to see at Springfield a strong body of militia recruited by the state government at state expense; but where this force was to be raised, and how it was to be brought to Springfield before the insurgents should have sacked the arsenal, his writings fail to explain.

On reaching Boston, Knox laid the matter before the governor, and the governor invited to confer with the Secretary and himself a number of his most confidential advisers. Among those present was Rufus King, at that time a member of Congress for Massachusetts.¹ At this meeting was developed the plan, which has always been ascribed to a committee of Congress, that the call for troops should originate with the national government. The first question discussed was whether the federal munitions should be protected at Springfield or removed. Every one present preferred the former course. To remove the stores would require as many men as to guard them, and the insurgents would think that they had frightened both the state and national governments. But how could the insurgents be kept quiet while the state was collecting its forces? The mere knowledge that the arsenal was to be protected might provoke an instant attack. To meet this difficulty the suggestion was made, and unanimously approved, that Congress, without referring to the insurrection, should request the state to furnish a quota of federal troops. It was hoped that in response to this call a force could be assembled without stirring up the insurgents. Having once secured

¹ The exact composition of this council is not certain. Knox described it in his letter of October 8 to the President of Congress as "Those gentlemen connected in the affairs of Government, with whom he consulted confidentially, on this occasion" (Papers of the Old Congress, No. 150, II. 17-19). In the report of October 18 it is stated that "The gentlemen with whom he advised on my communications, were of the most respectable character in the state for their political knowledge" (*ibid.*, 67-71). Probably it was a gathering in which the three departments of the state government were all represented. Several such conferences had previously been held on the question of using troops to protect the courts. On September 7, for example, the governor had consulted the council, the justices of the Supreme Court, the attorney general, and such members of both houses of the General Court as were in Boston (Massachusetts Archives, CXC. 242-245).

The date of the meeting, also, is not exactly known. Since Knox, however, was in Springfield on October 3, and on the eighth wrote an account of the conference to the President of Congress, it was probably not earlier than the fifth nor later than the seventh of the month. There is, of course, no mention of the meeting in the files or minutes of the governor's council, for it could not be regarded as a meeting of that body.

these troops, the federal government might use them to protect its property.¹

It is impossible to say who originated this device. It is known, however, that King talked with Gerry on this visit to Massachusetts about the probability of an Indian war. A few days later he took an active part in pushing the requisition for troops through Congress. A plausible conjecture—though no more than a conjecture—would be that the artifice was his.² From whatever source it came, the plan must have strongly appealed to Knox. It seemed to promise complete success to his mission. As has been said, what he most desired was a guard of federal troops at Springfield. It will be seen, moreover, that, for reasons quite apart from the rebellion in Massachusetts, he wished such troops to be raised.

It remained to secure the help of Congress in the stratagem which had been devised. This was a somewhat delicate undertaking. Governor Bowdoin could hardly venture a request to Congress without permission from the General Court; but to breathe the project to the General Court would both betray the secret and defeat the plan. That assembly was not yet ready for decisive action against the insurgents by the state government, much less for federal intervention. The only way, therefore, was to leave the matter informally to the management of the Secretary at War and the Massachusetts delegates in Congress. Knox and King accordingly returned to New York. On the way the former made such arrangements as he could—in which he admitted that he had little faith—for the temporary safety of the arsenal. He directed General Shepard to watch the situation closely, and to call out the militia, if he should see signs of trouble. He also wrote to several Revolutionary officers, urging them to volunteer their services, if help should be required at Springfield. Finally, he arranged with Governor Huntington, of Connecticut, that, in case of need, twelve or fifteen hundred of the Connecticut militia should march to Shepard's assistance.³

On October 18 Congress received from Knox a full report upon the situation in Massachusetts. He spared no emphasis in depicting the dangerous tendencies which he ascribed to the rebellion. He declared that "great numbers of people in Massachusetts and the neighbouring states . . . avow the principle of annihilating all debts

¹ Knox to Congress, October 3, 8, and 18 (Papers of the Old Congress, No. 150, I. 587-590; II. 17-19, 67-71).

² King to Gerry, October 19, 1786, *Life and Correspondence of Rufus King*, I. 191-192.

³ Knox's report of October 18; also letters to several officers (Knox MSS., XIX. 20, 22, 26, 27).

public and private. . . . It is my firm conviction," he added, "unless the present commotions are checked with a strong hand, that an armed tyranny may be established on the ruins of the present constitution." Nothing, he continued, short of a guard of five hundred men would suffice to protect the arsenal at Springfield. He therefore recommended that the force of seven hundred men then in the service of the United States¹ should be increased to fifteen hundred. The new recruits would guard the arsenal during the coming winter, and, "if they should not be requisite for the same purpose the next spring, they might be marched to the frontier, or disbanded as Congress should think most proper."

The report was committed to Messrs. Pettit, Lee, Pinckney, Henry, and Smith. On October 20 this committee presented a report and accompanying resolutions, all of which Congress unanimously approved. These votes provided for an increase in the army of thirteen hundred and forty non-commissioned officers and privates. The total non-commissioned force would then be two thousand and forty strong. Furthermore, nearly all the new recruits were to come from New England, and scarcely less than half from Massachusetts. Of infantry and artillery Rhode Island was to furnish one hundred and twenty men, Connecticut one hundred and eighty, New Hampshire two hundred and sixty, and Massachusetts six hundred and sixty. Outside of New England only Virginia and Maryland were called upon—each to supply a cavalry troop of sixty men. It was further voted that all possible haste should be urged upon the governments of these states; that the governors should be asked to assemble the legislatures, if they were not in session, in order that the quota might be promptly granted. Means for the support and payment of the troops should be devised and reported to Congress by the Board of Treasury.²

Now it would seem obvious that this action of Congress was due to the recent statements of Knox about the insurrection. On the contrary, nothing of the sort can be gathered from the committee's report. That document made no reference whatever to the crisis in Massachusetts. It did give, however, a highly colored account of impending danger from the western Indians. Papers had come in

¹ Knox to Bowdoin, October 22, 1786 (*ibid.*, 29). Cf. *Journals of Congress*, April 1, 7, and 12, 1785.

² *Journals of Congress*, XI. 186-188 (edition of 1801).

The resolution further provided that the recruits were to serve for three years, unless sooner disbanded. The Secretary at War was to call upon the governments of the states in which the troops were to be raised for such commissioned officers as their respective quotas required. Subject to order from the War Office, the Board of Treasury was to contract for clothing and rations.

from the War Office, according to the committee, filled with startling reports of the doings of several Indian nations. The Shawnees, Pottawattamies, Chippewas, Tawas, and Twightwees were mentioned in particular. These tribes were already gathering at the Shawnee towns; with them was a gang of desperados called Min-goës and Cherokees, outcasts from other tribes, who had banded together for war and plunder. A thousand warriors would soon be assembled; some had already started on the war-path. The southern Indians, as well as the northern, were discontented, and plans were afoot to unite all the tribes in a war against the United States. Nothing but the promptest measures could avert this dreadful calamity. This situation, said the committee, demanded that the army should be immediately increased. The western frontier and the settlements beyond towards the Mississippi river could then be defended. This protection would also hasten the surveying and sale of the western lands and the consequent reduction of the public debt.

Why did the committee say nothing about the insurrection in Massachusetts? The reason appeared in a secret report, presented on the following day by the same committee, and unanimously approved by Congress.¹ This paper dealt fully with affairs in Massachusetts. Referring for their facts to the report of General Knox "and other authentic information,"² the committee stated that a dangerous insurrection had broken out and was rapidly gaining ground in that state; that the legislature would not accept help from Congress, if it were offered openly, but that such help was none the less absolutely necessary.³ Indeed, unless it should be quickly given, it was probable that the arsenal at Springfield would be seized, the state government overthrown, the commonwealth reduced to

¹ Papers of the Old Congress, No. 30, Reports of the Committees on Indian Affairs, etc., II. 405-407. Here is preserved the original report, indorsed "Private report . . . passed 21 Oct. 1786—." The draft has many corrections, which are all in the handwriting of Charles Thomson, the Secretary of Congress. It is probable that the changes represent amendments made by Congress during the consideration of the report. At any rate, they show the extreme caution with which the question was handled and the fear of disclosing, even in a secret report, the share of the Massachusetts politicians in the intrigue. The report as corrected and passed was copied by Thomson into the MS. Domestic Secret Journal, 227-229. It was not entered at all in the public journal. It is printed in *Secret Journals of Congress*, I. (Domestic Affairs), 268-270.

² The report as originally submitted told whence this information came. The passage read, "and the additional Information derived from the honorable Delegates from the State of Massachusetts Bay". Evidently the honorable delegates did not wish to go on record, but they must do so now.

³ The unrevised report added, "such Aid is earnestly desired by the Governor and Council, tho' particular circumstances prevent its being applied for in a more formal manner".

anarchy, and the United States involved in civil war. In view of these things, the committee declared that Congress was "bound by the Confederation,"¹ by ties of friendship, and by good policy to make such arrangements as would enable it, if required, to assist the government of Massachusetts. In addition, the magazine at Springfield must be protected. It therefore followed, the report continued, that troops must be raised; but it also followed that the insurrection must not be mentioned as a reason for raising them. Fortunately, other matters in the hands of the committee furnished sufficient ground for ordering an increase of the army. Such action had therefore been advised in the report on the western country. In conclusion, it was pointed out that, since New England would furnish most of the troops, they could serve the desired purpose there before they were marched to the frontier.

Congress might call recruits, but would they come without some guarantee of pay and sustenance? To face this question was the cheerless task of the Board of Treasury. On the same day this Board recommended that a requisition for 530,000 dollars in specie be laid in due quotas on the states of the Union. On the credit of this requisition a loan of 500,000 dollars, bearing interest at six *per cent.*, might at once be opened. Congress unanimously adopted these proposals.² Finally, a curious resolution was passed to stimulate subscriptions to the loan. In obscure and involved phrases it warned the wealthy men of New England to contribute generously, unless they wished to see the new recruits mutiny for lack of pay and go over to the insurgents.³

It has always been assumed that the reports of danger on the frontier were simply used as a blind by the committee on Indian affairs. The truth is, on the contrary, that those reports were perfectly genuine and quite grave enough to call for active measures of defence. Ever since the conclusion of peace with Great Britain the United States had been drifting towards a serious Indian war. The greatest danger arose in the Northwest, and the policies of both the English and the Americans tended to increase it. The Indians, though justly angry with Great Britain for surrendering their country in the treaty of peace, realized that they must defend that country against the power to which it was surrendered. In

¹ Cf. the third of the Articles of Confederation.

² *Journals of Congress*, XI. 188.

³ The resolution is added to the report of October 21 in the MS. Reports of the Committees on Indian Affairs and the *Secret Journals*. It might seem curious that an appeal to constituents should be entered in the secret journal, but of course it was intended for only a few constituents of a special class. These could be easily reached by confidential letters.

the refusal of the British to give up the western posts they found powerful moral support. Moreover, British agents travelled among the tribes, were present at their councils, urged them not to part with their lands, gave them supplies, including arms and ammunition—in fact, furnished every encouragement short of a definite promise of alliance. Officially, it is true, the British government and its higher representatives in America advised the Indians not to attack the United States. Practically, they fostered among the savages a hatred of the Americans which could hardly fail to lead to war.

The United States, on the other hand, pursued a course which the Indians regarded as most unjust. The first mistake was the attempt to conclude treaties with separate groups of tribes. To the rest this seemed merely a device to conquer in detail. In the next place, the Indians were required to acknowledge the territorial sovereignty of the United States according to the terms of the treaty with Great Britain. Such acknowledgment was extorted from the Wyandots, Delawares, Chippewas, and Ottawas at Fort McIntosh on January 21, 1785, and from the Shawnees at Fort Finney on January 31, 1786. The chief result of this acknowledgment was to accentuate the hostility of both the tribes which made it and those which refused to treat. In the third place, the Americans were steadily encroaching, without a shadow of right, in the Indians' opinion, on the country northwest of the Ohio river. By a treaty of October 22, 1784, the Iroquois gave up their western claims, and the Indians beyond the Ohio felt that they had been a second time betrayed. By the treaties at Fort McIntosh and Fort Finney large tracts of land nominally passed into the exclusive control of the United States. It soon became clear, however, that not even the tribes which made these treaties intended that they should be carried out. None the less, the cessions of their western claims by several states to the national government, the land ordinance of 1785, the appointment of a geographer and surveyors, the beginning of surveys in the Seven Ranges, and the efforts to devise a government for the western country all showed that Congress would soon open the Ohio lands to settlement. But hardest of all for the Indians to bear was the unlawful intrusion of the frontiersman, with his fundamental tenet that the red man has no rights which the white man is bound to respect. This intrusion, though forbidden by proclamations of Congress, was so continuous and extensive that it produced a chronic state of guerrilla warfare along the Ohio valley. Early in 1785 Congress ordered Lieutenant-Colonel Harmar, the commanding officer on the frontier, to drive out all settlers north of the

Ohio, and during that year and the next Harmar expelled as many as he could, but the tide of immigration was by no means stopped.¹

For all these reasons no moment of the year 1786 was free from danger of a general Indian war. The commissioners who treated with the Shawnees in January reported the hostile feeling and continued depredations of the other western tribes.² Various army officers on the frontier confirmed their view.³ The Kentucky "long knives" regarded the situation apparently with more pleasure than alarm, and bombarded Governor Henry of Virginia with requests for permission to make the first attack.⁴ In response the state government authorized the field officers of Kentucky to "concert some system for their own defence," and requested Congress to assist in protecting the Kentucky border.⁵

Congress directed Butler and Parsons, the Commissioners of Indian Affairs, to report whether the settlers in Kentucky were really in danger. The reply of the commissioners, read in Congress on June 21, stated that distinct hostility, with active encouragement from the British, was the fixed attitude of the tribes beyond the Ohio. The only way to bring them to terms would be to march a strong body of troops into their country, overawe them with this show of force, expel the British agents, and then make a comprehensive treaty. Especially it was urged that an expedition should be sent to break up a marauding band of Cherokees and other Indians, which at that moment was the most serious menace to the people of Kentucky.⁶ Now to carry out such a policy would of course require

¹ Justin Winsor, *The Westward Movement*, Chapter XIII.; Theodore Roosevelt, *The Winning of the West*, III. Chapter II.; C. C. Royce, "Cessions of Land by Indian Tribes to the United States", *First Annual Report of the Bureau of Ethnology*, 249-262, and "Indian Land Cessions to the United States", *Eighteenth Annual Report of the Bureau of Ethnology*, Part II., 648-651. Further valuable information on Indian affairs is found in the report, dated February 1, 1786, of Richard Butler and Samuel Holden Parsons, who made the treaty with the Shawnees. The feeling of the frontier settlers towards the Indians is illustrated by the statement that the Kentuckians could hardly be restrained from attacking the Indians who were negotiating the treaty (Papers of the Old Congress, No. 56, Indian Affairs, 377-384). In the same volume (pages 341-407) are numerous papers concerning the visit to Congress in the spring of 1786 of the Seneca chief best known as "Cornplanter". These throw much light on the situation in the Indian country.

² Papers of the Old Congress, No. 56, 377-384.

³ *Ibid.*, No. 150, I. 137-155, 293-294.

⁴ *Ibid.*, No. 56, 213, 268-269, 271-273.

⁵ Resolves of the Virginia Council and letter of Governor Henry, Richmond, May 15-16, 1786 (*ibid.*, No. 150, II. 37-38).

⁶ *Ibid.*, No. 56, 283-285. The report was based on reliable statements from agents who had been sent out in a vain effort to gather the western tribes for a general treaty.

the raising of more troops. General Knox brought this point out clearly by reporting, on the same day, that the force then in the federal service was entirely insufficient to defend the whole Kentucky frontier. If war should break out, at least fifteen hundred men would be required. As an immediate measure he recommended that two companies should be sent to the falls of the Ohio.¹ On the next day Congress voted to send two companies to that point,² and soon afterwards instructed Knox to report on the expense of increasing the army as he had suggested.³

At this point, for a time, the movement towards strengthening the federal army paused. The summer passed without bringing much disquieting news from the frontier. There was a moment of peril when in June the Six Nations and certain western Indians met in council near Niagara. Joseph Brant, who had recently returned from England, tried to unite the tribes there represented against the United States, but was obliged to confess that the British government would promise no active help. The Shawnees, who came intent on hostilities, received no encouragement from the Iroquois, and the danger of war seemed for the moment to have passed.⁴

In reality, however, at this very time the war clouds were rapidly gathering in two distinct localities—Vincennes and the Shawnee towns along the Scioto and Miami rivers. At Vincennes the French inhabitants greatly outnumbered and cordially hated the Americans. The Indians, who complained of perfidious and brutal treatment from the Americans, sided entirely with the French. Threats and minor collisions finally produced a reign of terror, during which the Americans appealed to George Rogers Clark for help. Seizing this welcome opportunity, the Kentuckians on August 2 decided to send a strong expedition under Clark against the Indians. Nearly half of the Kentucky militia was called out, and it was expected that about the middle of September twelve hundred men or more would march from the falls of the Ohio. This was war, and it might be difficult for Congress to take no part.⁵ On the other hand, the

¹ Papers of the Old Congress, No. 151, 187-189.

² *Journals of Congress*, XI. 86-87.

³ Indorsement in Charles Thomson's hand on the report of General Knox dated June 19 and read on June 21, 1786.

⁴ "Cornplanter" was present at this council, labored for peace, and came to Pittsburg with a full report, which was forwarded to Congress (Col. William Butler to Gen. Richard Butler, Pittsburg, September 11, 1786, Papers of the Old Congress, No. 150, II. 1-13). Cf. Winsor, *The Westward Movement*, 273-274.

⁵ Major William North to Knox, "Camp Rapids of the Ohio," August 23, 1786, and Muskingum, September 15, 1786 (Papers of the Old Congress, No. 150, II. 21-23, 25-26, 33-35). In his second report North enclosed a long letter from J. M. P. Legrace to General Clark, dated Post St. Vincent, July 22, 1786, and

Shawnee warriors returned from Niagara disappointed at the submissive temper of the Iroquois, but none the less determined upon war. They summoned the braves of the surrounding tribes to council at their towns. Several hundred warriors assembled—some estimates put the number as high as two thousand—and during July and August, while the war dance was in progress at the towns, small parties were raiding the settlements south of the Ohio and coming back with prisoners and scalps. Finally, at Lower Sandusky early in September several tribes made an offensive alliance against the United States. It was given out that upon Hutchins and his surveyors would fall the first blow in a great struggle for the boundary of the Ohio.¹

Now to understand the attitude of Congress on the Indian question, one must ask just what news it had received by the twentieth of October. It is the failure to make this enquiry that has so long involved the subject in confusion. In 1786 news travelled slowly from the Ohio to New York. Major William North, inspector of the federal troops, who in the summer made a trip down the Ohio river, sent to General Knox, in letters of August 23 and September 15, the first explicit information about both Clark's intended expedition and the threatened Indian attack. He declared that "the greatest part of those tribes who treated with us are inclined for war and the British agents and traders are doing everything in their power to set them upon us. The Wabash indians are inimical as in fact are all the tribes who have any connexion with the British."² It was not till October 16 that these letters, with depositions and other accompanying papers, were submitted for the information of Congress.³ On the nineteenth Knox sent in further papers of a similar tenor from Lieutenant-Colonel Harmar. Taken together, these communications contained practically everything concerning Indian affairs which appeared in the committee report of October 20.

From all these things several conclusions may be drawn. First, the statements of the committee, far from being fabricated, were amply supported by information from responsible officers on the frontier. When these officers wrote they could not possibly have

setting forth the French view of the situation there (*ibid.*, 41-62). North also sent the resolves of the Kentucky officers on August 2 (*ibid.*, 38-40). Cf. Roosevelt, *The Winning of the West*, III. 78-83.

¹ Letters of North, cited above, with enclosures from persons who had recently been at the Shawnee towns; Harmar to Knox, September 17 and October 10, with similar enclosures (Papers of the Old Congress, No. 150, II. 75-80, 91-101).

² North's letter of August 23, cited above.

³ Papers of the Old Congress, No. 150, II. 63.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 83.

foreseen any connection between their reports and civil commotions in Massachusetts. Second, if there had been no commotions whatever in Massachusetts, the danger in the West would have fully justified an increase in the federal army. Third, the news of this danger reached Congress just in time to serve conveniently as the sole reason publicly assigned for ordering the new enlistments. General Knox, who was accustomed to write very frankly to Washington, sent the latter on October 23 an account which may be accepted as stating the facts just as Knox saw them. "The Indians on our frontiers," he said, "are giving indisputable evidence of their hostile intentions. Congress anxiously desirous of meeting the evils on the frontiers have unanimously agreed to augment the troops now in service. . . . This measure is important and will tend to strengthen the principles of government if necessary as well as to defend the frontiers. I mention the idea of strengthening government as confidential. But the state of Massachusetts requires the greatest assistance and Congress are fully impressed with the importance of supporting her with great exertions."¹ It may be added that the present writer is in no wise trying to prove that the Indian question alone would have roused Congress to action. Probably nothing short of open Indian war could have effected that. But that question did supply a real, though less powerful, motive, in addition to the one arising from the Shays Rebellion.

We now come to the questions which have been, perhaps, the most obscure of all—how were the troops actually raised, what use was made of them, and what was the attitude of the Massachusetts legislature in regard to the federal intervention. On October 22 Knox notified Governor Bowdoin of the quota required of Massachusetts. He enlarged upon the Indian war and was discreetly silent about the insurrection.² The same line of argument was followed by the governor, when five days later he laid the matter before the General Court. "It is of great importance," he said, "that the United States should be prepared against so formidable a combination."³ On the next day a bill passed both houses for the immediate raising of the troops.⁴ Those concerned in the plot to conceal the more important reason for the enlistments made studied efforts to keep up appearances. Governor Bowdoin in a later message declared that the news from the West was still more alarming, and that

¹ Knox MSS., XIX. 33.

² *Ibid.*, 29.

³ *Acts and Resolves of Massachusetts, 1786-87*, 948-949.

⁴ Massachusetts Archives, Court Records, XLVII. 200-203.

the surveyors had fled to the Ohio and cast up intrenchments.¹ King sent to Gerry from New York a gloomy forecast of "a very dangerous and extensive Indian War." The quota asked of Massachusetts did seem large, he said, but on a former occasion, when that state had been drawn on for less than her share, her government had promised to make up the difference, whenever required to do so.² Gerry's reply, however, showed that the secret was out. "Some of the country members laugh," he said, "and say the Indian War is only a political one to obtain a standing army."³ Major William North added with brutal frankness, "The people here smell a rat, that the Troops about to be raised are more for the Insurgents than the Indians."⁴ Colonel James Swan wrote to Knox on October 26, "Being in Town at Concert, I am agreeably saluted with the news of War being declared against the Indians. I hope in this declaration 'Indians,'—is meant all who oppose the Dignity, honour, and happiness of the United States, or of either of the States."⁵

Major-General Henry Jackson of the Massachusetts militia was appointed Lieutenant-Colonel to raise and command the state's contingent of the federal troops.⁶ He entered upon his duties with great zeal, but his task was that of making bricks without straw. No state except Virginia took any step towards paying the money requisition of October 21.⁷ The loan opened by the Board of Treasury was consequently an utter failure. The Massachusetts legislature naturally enough felt that it could grant no money save for the immediate recruiting service. For this an appropriation of twenty-five hundred pounds was made,⁸ but the loan which was opened as the only means of obtaining this money excited little enthusiasm among the wealthy men of Boston. "I have no Money as yet to commence recruiting," wrote Jackson on November 19, "and

¹ *Acts and Resolves of Massachusetts, 1786-87*, 954-956 (Message of November 13).

² *Life and Correspondence of Rufus King*, I. 191-192.

³ *Ibid.*, 193.

⁴ Knox MSS., XIX. 36 (North to Knox, October 29, 1786). North had come to Boston with Knox's recommendation for a commission, which he received, as a major in the Massachusetts contingent.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 35.

⁶ Jackson's commission, dated April 2, 1787, and signed by St. Clair and Knox, is in the Boston Public Library.

⁷ *The Papers of James Madison*, II. 581. Virginia laid an additional export duty of six shillings per hogshead on tobacco to meet the requisition; Hening, *Statutes at Large . . . of Virginia*, XII. 288.

⁸ *Acts and Resolves of Massachusetts, 1786-87*, 374-376. One member remarked that it was unnecessary to pay the soldiers, for they would all get rich western lands (North to Knox, October 29, Knox MSS., XIX. 36).

I know not when I shall."¹ Christopher Gore in a letter to King burst out with the wish that "it was generally believed that an attack on property and a subversion of the Government was intended, for so great a languor, so little spirit I never knew. £500 only," he continued, "have yet been subscribed . . . though it is generally thought that those troops are to be raised to support the authority in Mass. . . . Is not this dreadful?"² Knox, who had predicted a hearty response to a loan, was keenly disappointed by these lean results.³ The explanation is, apparently, that the government party in Massachusetts was now growing tired of temporizing with the insurgents, and was almost ready for a forcible exertion of the authority of the commonwealth. With this change of feeling, the artifice of raising federal troops lost much of the support which it had at first commanded.⁴

The requisition and the loans might languish, but contracts must meantime be let for the support, and, if possible, the payment of the troops. Knox and the Board of Treasury besought Robert Morris and Jeremiah Wadsworth to take up this task, but these gentlemen did not display unseemly eagerness. "Although," wrote Knox, "I found that they possessed the best disposition to render every reasonable service to their Country, yet at the same time it was in no degree their desire to undertake any public operations whatever." Morris finally agreed in general terms to enter upon the business, and this enabled Knox to drag in the unwilling Wadsworth. The latter complained, "where the Money is to come from Heaven knows," but Knox replied, "For Gods sake do not delay a single moment longer than is indispensably necessary." Delays did continue, however, and, after the recruiting had begun, it looked at times as if the men would freeze and starve. It is hard to see how Jackson could have made any progress with his enlistments, had not Stephen Bruce promptly advanced such supplies, except uniforms, as he required. In Connecticut recruits came into Hartford in the dead of winter without the slightest provision for their support. With much grumbling Wadsworth gave them food, fuel, and shelter, "but," he wrote to Knox, "the Treasury Board must . . . refund my present advances—or I shall immediately Stop." Finally, in February, the lack of response to either the requisition or the loan caused Morris and Wadsworth to throw up the whole negotiation with the govern-

¹ Knox MSS., XIX. 53.

² *Life and Correspondence of Rufus King*, I. 196.

³ Knox MSS., XIX. 29, 75.

⁴ The loss of interest is mentioned with regret by Stephen Higginson in a letter to Knox of November 25, 1786; *Report of the American Historical Association*, 1896, I. 743-745.

ment. No regular contracts were entered into for the subsistence of the recruits.¹

All these difficulties delayed the recruiting till it seemed likely to become a jest. "The Deacons of Massachusetts," wrote Wadsworth to Knox on December 11, "hant raised a man yet as I am told and believe—what do you think of them—Shays has 7 or 800 in arms. Had you not better employ them than Wait for the Deacons. I begin to think he will govern the State, as I see no disposition in any body else to do it."² In reality Jackson, trusting to money pledged though not yet paid, had just begun enlisting men. He had enrolled seventy at the end of the month and twice as many before the last of January. On February 18 he reported one hundred and ninety recruits. It was slow work, however, and the total number enlisted in the state was not quite half of the allotted quota. A large number of the men, probably two-thirds or more, were Revolutionary veterans.³ There was also difficulty in securing officers. The twenty Revolutionary captains who were offered commissions remembered how they had formerly been paid, and only three of them accepted. It was the middle of January before the list was complete.⁴ For reasons easy to surmise, instead of attempting to draw arms and accoutrements from Springfield, Knox sent these supplies, by sea no doubt, from Philadelphia.⁵

To complete Jackson's discomfiture, the not too buoyant sails of his enterprise were almost completely blanketed by General Lincoln's expedition. The federal officers must have felt envious at the promptness with which thousands of militia responded and thousands of pounds were subscribed to prosecute this campaign. Jackson at first hoped that Lincoln's war-chest might overflow to the benefit of the recruiting service, but there is no indication that it did.⁶ The crisis of the rebellion brought forward again the question of guarding and using the Continental stores at Springfield. In December

¹ Correspondence of Knox, Morris, Wadsworth, Bruce, Jackson, and the Board of Treasury, November 22, 1786—February 11, 1787 (Knox MSS., XIX. 28, 56, 62, 67, 70, 76, 78, 85, 87, 89, 92, 105, 121, 161, 163); Knox to Congress, February 12 and May 2, 1787 (Papers of the Old Congress, No. 150, II. 243-245, 327-329). Jackson paid Bruce as far as he could from the money subscribed in Massachusetts.

² Knox MSS., XIX. 85.

³ Jackson to Knox, December 11 and 31, 1786, January 28 and February 18, 1787 (*ibid.*, 84, 111, 141, 170); Knox to Congress, May 2, 1787 (Papers of the Old Congress, No. 150, II. 327-329).

⁴ Jackson to Knox, November 19, 1786, and January 17, 1787 (Knox MSS., XIX. 53, 120). Most of the appointments were made on the recommendation of Knox or Jackson.

⁵ Knox to Jackson, December 3, 1786 (*ibid.*, 75); Jackson to Knox, December 11 (*ibid.*, 84).

⁶ Jackson to Knox, January 10, 1787 (*ibid.*, 124).

General Shepard asked for permission to arm the Hampshire militia from the magazine. Knox, in spite of his ardent devotion to the government cause in Massachusetts, never dared to use national troops or property for other than strictly national purposes. He therefore informed Shepard that without a vote of Congress—and Congress could not find a quorum—he could not grant this permission.¹ In January, however, the insurgents once more threatened the arsenal. Shepard, who had been stationed at Springfield with a thousand men, deemed national interests sufficiently involved, and on the nineteenth wrote to Knox that he was about to draw supplies from the magazine. He took some five hundred small-arms, three field-pieces, a howitzer, the necessary ammunition, and some accoutrements for horsemen. He was probably relieved when word at last arrived from Knox that his action was approved. Shepard soon found himself besieged by a greatly superior force of insurgents. All approach to Springfield except from the south was cut off. Shays knew that his one hope was to scatter Shepard's force and seize the arsenal before Lincoln's arrival. On January 25 took place the famous attack and repulse. It was the federal artillery which turned the insurgent column to flight. A few days later General Lincoln dispersed the entire force under Shays, and the backbone of the rebellion was broken. The Hampshire militia continued for a time to guard the arsenal.²

From all these stirring scenes the federal recruits were conspicuously absent. Jackson had proposed to offer their services to General Lincoln, but was overruled by Knox. The truth is that Knox was disgusted at the failure of the state government to give financial support to the recruiting, and that government was equally dissatisfied with the inactivity of the recruits. Jackson was entirely right when he said that it was hopeless to expect help from the wealthy men, unless his command should do something which would at least appear to be of advantage to the state. His businesslike plan was that his force should be assigned without restrictions to the service of the commonwealth, provided the latter would assume the entire expense. This would save the state an equal expenditure on the militia, would give it credit to the same extent on its federal account, and would insure the speedy completion of the quota. The two governments would thus be working in harmony and no longer

¹ Knox MSS., XIX., 95, 103.

² Shepard to Knox, January 19 (Papers of the Old Congress, No. 150, II. 173); Knox to Shepard, January 21 (Knox MSS., XIX. 133); John Bryant to Knox, January 23 (Papers of the Old Congress, No. 150, II. 177-178); Shepard to Bowdoin, January 26 (Massachusetts Archives, CXC. 317-318); Abel Whitney to Knox, February 2 (Papers of the Old Congress, No. 150, II. 211-217).

at cross-purposes. Unfortunately, this sensible advice made no impression upon Knox.¹

From the side of the state the first official protest was heard on February 5. The Senate passed a resolution, introduced, it is said, by Samuel Adams, requesting the governor to inform Congress that a rebellion existed, that the government, supported by the great majority of the people, was successfully suppressing it, but that, should any emergency arise, the state would count upon "such support from the United States as is expressly and solemnly stipulated by the Articles of Confederation." In the House the friends of the insurgents were by this time quite discredited and overridden. On this question, however, they were probably reinforced by members who, without favoring rebellion, disliked federal interference. At any rate, the resolution was recast by the House, though with what changes the records do not show. The Senate refused to concur and conferees were appointed. Then the Senate voted to add an amendment, requesting the governor to ask Congress to take its own measures for protecting its property at Springfield, "in order that the troops of this state now stationed there, may be employed on other service." On the seventh the House was whipped into line and accepted the Senate measure, amendment and all. Harmony thus seemed to be restored, but, for some reason, perhaps an informality in procedure, the Senate recalled the resolution, even after voting to send it to the governor, and passed it once more without alteration on the ninth. The House, meantime, had experienced another change of heart, and now voted the measure down. Again conferees were appointed, and then, on the same afternoon, the resolve once more passed the Senate, seemingly as new business, was sent down, and was promptly accepted by the House. To add a final touch of mystery to the affair, the resolution which at last prevailed has completely disappeared. It is known, however, that Governor Bowdoin wrote to Congress as the General Court desired, and that he added the request about the arsenal.²

¹ Jackson to Knox, December 31, January 21, February 11 and 18 (Knox MSS., XIX. 111, 132, 163, 170). Jackson pointed out that the decision of the state government early in February to raise a force of militia not to exceed 1500 men for four months was a menace to his recruiting, since the state offered a larger bounty than he did.

² The resolution which was finally passed does not appear in the Court Records or in the *Acts and Resolves*, and a diligent search in the files of the Massachusetts Archives has failed to unearth it. Its passage, however, is clearly recorded in the MS. Journal of the Senate, VII. 344, and the MS. Journal of the House of Representatives, VII. 397. It is also distinctly mentioned in the governor's message of March 2 (*Acts and Resolves of Massachusetts, 1786-87, 974-975*). The controversy between the houses can be traced in the Journal of the Senate, VII. 325-344; and

Before the General Court had discovered its own mind, the strenuous proceedings in Hampshire County had already convinced Knox that the federal troops should be at Springfield. On February 9 he ordered both Jackson and Lieutenant-Colonel David Humphreys of the Connecticut contingent to march their commands thither. He warned them, however, to engage in no service except that of protecting the arsenal. Jackson, moreover, was to march only in case he should receive from the state government the means to pay his officers and support his men. Knox wrote to Lincoln on the same day that, while he expected that Humphreys would proceed to Springfield, he did not anticipate that Jackson would. His forecast was entirely accurate. Jackson received no supplies, and his orders, conditional though they had been, were promptly countermanded. Humphreys with one hundred and twenty men reached Springfield on February 24, and relieved the militia at the arsenal. This—unless the loan of arms is counted—was the nearest approach of the national government to armed intervention in the Shays Rebellion.¹

The countermanding of Jackson's orders may have had some influence on the Massachusetts legislature. It was followed up by a message from the governor, recalling to mind the long-neglected money requisition.² Then, on February 19, Congress took up the question of the enlistments, and, but for the determined opposition of the members from Massachusetts, would have voted to stop them then and there.³ Finally, on March 2, Governor Bowdoin informed the legislature that he had word from Knox that the Massachusetts recruits would march to Springfield as soon as the state should enable them to do so and not before. Thereupon the General Court at last responded. On March 7 an appropriation not to exceed five thousand pounds was voted "for the pay, cloathing and subsistence" of the federal troops.⁴ As an equivalent for this grant, the help of the United States forces was requested in the pursuit of insurgents beyond the borders of the state. Finally, a federal

the Journal of the House, VII. 380-397. In the Massachusetts Archives, CXC. 350-353, are also attested drafts giving nearly all the stages in the proceedings except the last. See also W. V. Wells, *The Life and Public Services of Samuel Adams*, III. 241-242. Last of all, a month later, the delegates in Congress took their turn in notifying that body concerning the rebellion. See below, p. 64, note 3.

¹ Knox to Jackson, February 9 (Papers of the Old Congress, No. 150, II. 239-241); to Lincoln, February 9 (Knox MSS., XIX. 160); to Congress, February 12 and March 13 (Papers of the Old Congress, No. 150, II. 243-245; No. 151, 243-254).

² February 14, 1787; *Acts and Resolves of Massachusetts*, 1786-87, 970-972.

³ *Journals of Congress*, XII. 11-12; *The Papers of James Madison*, II. 581-587.

⁴ *Acts and Resolves of Massachusetts*, 1786-87, 499.

commission was requested for General Lincoln, with authority to march the state militia to any place in the United States for the capture of insurgent refugees.¹ Congress paid no attention to these requests. Its only wish now was as soon as possible to abandon the enlistments. Its steps in this direction, which have never been correctly traced, must therefore be next considered.

Charles Pinckney moved in Congress, probably about the middle of February, that the enlistments be suspended until further directions should be given. On the nineteenth a committee to which his motion had been referred reported against it. In reply Pinckney contended that the rebellion in Massachusetts had been crushed, and that there was no money with which to pay and support the new recruits. A slight increase of the force stationed on the Ohio was the most he was willing to concede. King was on his feet as Pinckney sat down, with a "moving appeal" that the recruiting should go on. His chief argument was that, though the insurrection seemed to be quelled, the state would probably proceed not only to punish the chief offenders, but also to disarm and disfranchise the whole body of their followers. The success of this policy, he thought, was doubtful. A new crisis might result. To withdraw the support of Congress at this moment would look like disapproval, and might kindle the revolt afresh. Pinckney replied bluntly that he thought Congress ought to disapprove such measures as Massachusetts seemed likely to adopt; a state following such a course should be left to suffer the consequences. Then Madison, rising as mediator, contributed some remarkable observations. He first discussed the constitutionality of interference by Congress in the internal controversies of a state. It was a bit difficult, he admitted, to reconcile such a course with the Articles of Confederation. Those articles gave Congress only express powers, and this was not among them. Still, there was one circumstance which might justify such action. He referred to the danger of intervention by a foreign power. Now in this case direct evidence of such danger might be lacking; "yet there was sufficient ground for a general suspicion of readiness in Great Britain to take advantage of events in this country to warrant precautions against her." Such was the argument of the future author of the Virginia Resolutions. Coming to the question of stopping the enlistments, Madison seems almost to have used King's reasoning in support of Pinckney's conclusion. There might still be trouble, he said, in Massachusetts. The opinion of her delegates should have great weight. Every state might ask similar consideration in the future. In fact, this reflection had produced the enthu-

¹ *Ibid.*, 496-499.

siasm with which Virginia had voted a tax on tobacco to pay the requisition. As a compromise, he advised that the enlistments be not flatly countermanded, but suspended for a time, with rather indefinite instructions. On the division five states supported Pinckney's motion and three opposed it. Virginia was divided. The motion was therefore lost, but the vote showed that the enlistments had almost no support further south than New York.¹

On March 8 Grayson of Virginia moved that the stores at Springfield be transferred to some place of greater safety. Five days later Knox reported adversely upon this motion. Massachusetts, he said, had proved her ability to put down the rebellion and to defend the arsenal. Humphreys was now at Springfield with a sufficient guard. There was therefore no occasion to remove the stores. To do so, moreover, might hurt the reputation of the state government. He showed that Springfield was for various reasons an excellent place of deposit and as safe as any he could mention. Grayson's suggestion was accordingly dropped.²

On March 28 Congress appointed a committee "to consider the military establishment, and particularly to report a proper resolution for stopping the enlistments."³ This committee recommended on April 4 the repeal of the resolutions of October 20, the retention of the troops so far enlisted, and the discharge with pay of all officers appointed but no longer required.⁴ Even this moderate measure, which would have increased the army by about five hundred men, was more than Congress would adopt. As amended and passed on the ninth, the resolutions provided that from the troops raised in Massachusetts two artillery companies should be organized and stationed at Springfield. All other officers and men enrolled under the resolves of October 20 should be paid and discharged. This con-

¹ *Journals of Congress*, XII. 11-12; *The Papers of James Madison*, II. 581-587.

² Grayson's motion was not entered in the journal of Congress, but a memorandum of it is inserted between pages 242 and 243 of the Papers of the Old Congress, No. 151. Knox's report is in the same volume, 243-254. See also *The Papers of James Madison*, II. 590.

³ *Ibid.*, 598. Madison states that King had reminded Congress of the previous motion for discontinuing the enlistments, "and intimated that the state of things in Massachusetts was at present such that no opposition would now be made by the delegates of that State." This is hard to reconcile with the later opposition which those delegates did make. It may be, however, that they were ready for the stopping of enlistments, but not for the partial disbandment finally voted.

It may be added that on March 9 the Massachusetts delegates had, as instructed, laid before Congress a long account of the rebellion and the steps taken to suppress it. They expressed their assurance that, had need arisen, Congress would have given the effective help required by the Articles of Confederation (*Journals of Congress*, XII. 15-22).

⁴ Papers of the Old Congress, No. 30, Reports on Indian Affairs, 409-412.

clusion was reached by a vote of seven states against two. Massachusetts and Rhode Island voted "no"; New York was divided.¹ "I have entertained many doubts," wrote King to Gerry, "relative to the policy of this measure considering the situation of Massachusetts and the condition of the confederacy. Our State voted agt. the measure, but we were almost singular."²

The "condition of the confederacy" might well lead members to oppose the resolutions. Crises like the Shays Rebellion might occur in other states than Massachusetts, and men might again look to the federal army as a possible bulwark against anarchy. But the history of the recent enlistments proved that with such questions the existing federal government had neither the power nor the capacity to deal. The trouble was not that Congress had been indifferent. On the contrary, Congress had seen the danger clearly and had striven to meet it. But it could find no adequate material resources, and its secret method prevented it from exerting any moral influence. Shays and Lincoln went their ways without the least regard for Congress and its recruits. Rebellion completed the proof that a real national government must be established. It was reserved for the Whisky Insurrection of 1794 to show how a real national government would treat rebellion. So low, moreover, had the prestige of Congress sunk, that in abandoning the enlistments it seemed to be letting slip almost its last hold on actual power. William Pynchon wrote in his journal on April 19: "News that the Federal troops are discharged; that this is one of the last struggles of Congress. All grow uneasy, disaffected."³ Unless some new cement could be found, would not the rope of sand fall utterly to pieces?

There had been raised in all about three hundred recruits in Massachusetts and one hundred and fifty in Connecticut. Virginia had completed her cavalry troop of sixty men. New Hampshire and Rhode Island had voted to raise their quotas and had appointed officers, but no money was appropriated, and nothing further was done. Maryland made no response whatever. The two Massachusetts companies of artillery, numbering seventy-three men each, were marched to Springfield during May and June. One of them was soon afterwards ordered to West Point. All the other recruits

¹ *Journals of Congress*, XII. 28-29. The money requisition of October 21, 1786, was repealed on May 3. Provision was made for crediting the states on their federal accounts for all expenses which they had incurred (*ibid.*, 41).

² *Life and Correspondence of Rufus King*, I. 218. King mentions to Gerry another motive for his opposition. "I am extremely mortified", he says, "with the Disappointments which this arrangement will produce with the worthy Gentlemen who have laid aside other concerns and engaged as Officers in this corps".

³ *Journal of William Pynchon*, 275-276.

were quickly disbanded. They were paid off with orders on the receivers of Continental taxes.¹

One question remains to be answered. What of the Indian hostilities? Why was there no appeal to them—so far as is recorded—as a reason for continuing the enlistments? This question has always been ignored, no doubt because of the assumption that, from the first, Congress had not taken the Indian question seriously. The real explanation, while not quite so easy as this, is still not difficult to find. It is simply that the Indian troubles had ceased for a time to be an insistent issue. George Rogers Clark's expedition to Vincennes in September, 1786, drew off the attention of the Shawnees and their allies from their intended attack on the surveyors and the settlements near the Ohio. Clark's raid has generally been called a failure, because many of his men mutinied, and he struck no decisive blow. It seems clear, however, that he contributed much, at a critical moment, towards averting an Indian war.² Equally important, perhaps, was an attack upon the Shawnees made in October by several hundred Kentucky militia under Colonel Benjamin Logan. The Indian warriors had gone to meet Clark. Logan therefore swept through the country almost unopposed, burned seven of the Shawnee villages and all of their corn, took scalps and prisoners, and seems quite to have broken the spirit of the tribe.³ As a result of these expeditions⁵ and of disagreements among the tribes,⁴ the Indians made no concerted attack that year. In December Brant gathered a great council of the Iroquois and the western tribes near the mouth of the Detroit river. He labored to carry in this assembly a declaration of war against the Americans. Failing in this, he secured a united demand for peace, on the terms of the Ohio boundary and a common treaty between the whole Indian confederacy

¹ Reports of Knox to Congress, May 2, July 14, September 26, 1787 (Papers of the Old Congress, No. 150, II. 321-324, 327-329, 413-414). Virginia, Connecticut, and Rhode Island voted their quotas in October, 1786; New Hampshire on December 26. Hening, *Statutes . . . of Virginia*, XII. 255; *At the General Assembly . . . of . . . Rhode Island . . . begun on the last Monday in October*, etc., Providence, printed by John Carter, pp. 7-8; A. S. Batchellor, editor, *Early State Papers of New Hampshire*, XX. 723, 760; Humphreys to Washington, November 1, 1786, in Sparks, *Correspondence of the Revolution*, IV. 147-149.

² Harmar to Knox, November 15, 1786; Richard Butler (Superintendent of Indian Affairs) to Knox, December 13, 1786 (Papers of the Old Congress, No. 150, II. 115-118, 163-166); Roosevelt, *The Winning of the West*, III. 83-84; Winsor, *The Westward Movement*, 275, 345.

³ Harmar's letter of November 15 gives a good account of Logan's raid.

⁴ Butler to Knox, January 3, 1787 (Papers of the Old Congress, No. 150, II. 257-258).

⁵ Butler and Harmar both wrote that the Wyandots and Delawares opposed the warlike counsels of the Shawnees.

and the United States.¹ The message from this council to Congress was a high-spirited manifesto backed by great power. Nevertheless, it made possible for a time the substitution of diplomacy for war, and it was during the breathing space thus gained that the question of terminating the enlistments came up in Congress. It was true that small bands of frontiersmen and Indians continued their mutual depredations, and the Kentuckians still panted for war.² Nevertheless, General Butler could truthfully write on March 28: "Our prospects of peace with the Indian nations are much brighter than they have been, and I hope . . . they will daily increase." This letter was laid before Congress on the very day on which the disbandment was voted.³ It thus came about that both of the reasons for increasing the federal army had lost most of their original force. Congress therefore needed little persuasion to reverse its policy. To General Knox, however, it was a great sorrow to lose the troops which he had so laboriously obtained. He felt sure, as he had a year before, that not less than fifteen hundred men were constantly needed on the frontier. Still, he admitted that the government had no resources with which to maintain so large a force.⁴

JOSEPH PARKER WARREN.

¹ "Extracts from the indian speeches at the Western council" (Papers of the Old Congress, No. 150, II. 267-277); Butler to Knox, March 28, 1787 (*ibid.*, 287-298); letter from the Indian council at the mouth of the Detroit river to Congress (*ibid.*, 381-387).

² Harmar to Knox, May 14; Knox to Congress, July 10; John Cleves Symmes to the President of Congress, Louisville, Kentucky, May 3, 1787 (*ibid.*, 359-365; No. 151, 259-270; No. 56, 197-200, 205-207).

³ *Ibid.*, No. 150, II. 287-299.

⁴ Knox to Congress, July 10, 1787 (*ibid.*, No. 151, 259-270).